

**4 October 2018**

**Minute Extract**

## **15/18 Modern Slavery Briefing**

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director of Communities and Place which provided an overview of partnership work intended to tackle modern slavery in Derby and Derbyshire.

A presentation was received from the Cohesion and Prevent Manager noting examples of modern slavery and details of the legislative framework in which it was defined, including elements of the Children Act 2004, Care Act 2014 and the Modern Slavery Act 2014. It was noted that the authority had a statutory requirement to notify the Home Office of any suspected cases of modern slavery.

Exploitation and coercion were cited as common themes in cases of modern slavery. Human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude were also considered elements of modern slavery, as well as forced marriage and child sexual exploitation.

It was reported that the Modern Slavery Act 2015 had introduced more severe punishments for perpetrators and an automatic defence for victims of slavery and trafficking if they were involved in criminal enterprises. Other elements of the Act included an enhanced ability for authorities to place restrictions on individuals; new reparation orders and requirements for transparency statements from large businesses.

It was noted that transparency statements were required throughout supply chains; it was further noted that although it did not apply to public sector organisations, Derby City Council had elected to publish a statement voluntarily.

The nationalities of victims of modern slavery were considered. It was noted that amongst adults, Albanians, Vietnamese and Chinese residents were the most likely victims; however amongst children UK nationals were most prevalent. It was noted that many of those suspected of being victims of modern slavery refused to be identified as such when approached by authorities.

It was reported that in 2012 one victim of modern slavery was identified in the city; in 2017 this figure was 53 and in 2018 there had been 60 victims identified to date. It was suggested that a greater spotlight had been placed on the issue following a series of high profile operations.

The Board noted that many victims were easily exploited by criminals as they were vulnerable. It was reported that many were desperate to improve the lives and opportunities available to their family; had incurred debts; had come from countries and cultures where exploitation was normalised; or, were escaping persecution and conflict. It was stated that many were unable to walk away as they were afraid of

reprisals against their families at home; a perception that their life was still better than previously; or that they were unaware of their legal rights and entitlements whilst in the UK.

Victim identification and support was discussed, including the National Referral Mechanism. It was noted that Derby was a pilot authority with the Home Office for enhanced support to victims and survivors. Under a partnership with the Jacob's Well charity, victims were entitled to 45 days intensive support and a six month drop in service to help them access housing and employment opportunities.

The Board considered the Police response to modern slavery. It was reported that 'Operation Wilberforce' was a combined approach with a range of partner agencies, including Derby City Council, to disrupt modern slavery networks. The Board queried where children taken into care as a result of these operations were being placed; it was reported that foster care, children's homes and out of area placements were all utilised.

Members reported that it was commonplace to encounter local businesses that aroused suspicions and questioned what could be done in those situations. It was reported that members should report individuals who may be victims of modern slavery to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub or to report intelligence directly to the Cohesion and Prevent Manager or the Police via 101 requesting Operation Wilberforce.

The Board welcomed the presentation and were encouraged to note the extent of partnership work taking place in Derby to tackle modern slavery.

**The Corporate Services Scrutiny Review Board resolved:**

- **To recognise the work of public, private and voluntary sector partners in tackling modern slavery in Derby and Derbyshire, including the council's Neighbourhood Teams**
- **To recommend that Council Cabinet seek to protect services involved in the prevention of modern slavery as part of the 2019/20 Budget proposals.**